

Crown Hill Cemetery, Office Building
3402 Boulevard Place, at E. entrance to cemetery
Indianapolis
Marion County
Indiana

HABS No. IND-56

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

CROWN HILL CEMETERY, OFFICE BUILDING

Location: 3402 Boulevard Place, Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana.

Present Owner: Crown Hill Cemetery, 700 W. 38th St., Indianapolis, Indiana.

Present Occupant: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

Present Use: Headquarters and offices of the Historic Landmarks Foundation.

Statement of Significance: The Office Building is an excellent example of the High Victorian Gothic style of architecture and is in fine condition inside and out.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1885. Construction was begun in May, and scheduled for completion in October of the same year. (Secretary's Record, pp. 407, 409).

Exact date of completion is not given. In October the superintendent of the cemetery was authorized "to have a telephone placed in his residence so as to connect with the office," suggesting the completion of the office by that time (Secretary's Record, p. 413).

2. Architect: Adolph Scherrer of Indianapolis (Secretary's Record, p. 401, and Nicholas, p. 110). His fee was 4% of the cost and he was to furnish "all architectural plans, drawings, and specifications" and superintend construction (Secretary's Record, p. 405).

Adolf Scherrer was a native of St. Gall, Switzerland, and "had studied architecture in Vienna at the Academy of Fine Arts and with several important European architects." He came to Indianapolis in 1872 and worked in the office of Edwin May, architect of the present Indiana Capitol. May died before the building was "well underway" and the work was completed under Scherrer's direction. Scherrer was active in the architectural profession until his death in 1925. Among his later works are the following buildings in

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Indianapolis: Mannerchor Building (IND-100), City Hospital, and Elks Club Building. The old State Bank Building in Evansville, Indiana is also his work (Burns, p. 199).

3. Original and subsequent owners: See HABS report on Crown Hill Cemetery Chapel and Vault (IND-58) for information on an acquisition of land for the entire cemetery. Exact data locating the office building on its site is not available. It appears to rest on land which was part of two separately acquired plots. The first is 100' wide and appears to be, in effect, an extension of the 100' right of way of 34th Street. The southern part of the building must rest on this land. The second is a plot just to the north of this first plot and the northern part of the building must rest on this (Property Map).

Warranty Deed, October 12, 1863, recorded November 28, 1863 in Deeds Book LL, p. 170

James Trueblood

to

Crown Hill Cemetery

20 acres \pm , south half of southwest quarter of northeast quarter. (This is one of two plots included in this deed and is the one on which the northern part of the building appears to rest).

Warranty Deed December 24, 1863, recorded January 15, 1864 in Deeds Book MM, p. 93

Henry and Levi Wright

to

Crown Hill Cemetery

6.10 acres. (This is the southern plot.)

4. Contractors: For excavation and construction of foundations, Henry Helm and Son. For the rest of the building: Shover and Christian. Excavation and foundation work came to \$2,743.00 and the rest of the building to \$16,820.00. A. Bruner extended the sewer (Secretary's Record, pp. 407, 411.)
5. Original plan and construction: The following items refer to actions taken at meetings of the Board of Managers, unless otherwise noted. The chronological sequence of events is of interest, revealing much about the client-architect relationship.

June 23, 1884. The following advertisement was to be placed in the News Journal & Sentinel for two days:

Notice to Architects

The Managers of Crown Hill cemetery desire to select a plan for an entrance gate and gatekeeper's residence to be built on the Avenue Entrance from Illinois Street. Architects are respectfully solicited to propose designs for the same.

Plans with specifications and estimates will be received until 4 o'clock P.M. July 21st 1884 for a new entrance gate and other buildings to be erected at the Crown Hill Cemetery.

The gate and buildings to be located on the site in such a manner as to produce the best effect (for reference see topographical map in Secretary's office). Architects must limit the cost of the buildings complete not to exceed fifty thousand dollars.

The foundations and all walls below the grade line shall be built of flat rock or Vernon limestone. The principal material above to be Oolitic limestone facing for walls, and brick for backing and interior walls. The material for the inside finish to be at the option of the architects.

Ample provisions must be made for heating and ventilation. The schedule appended for the accommodations required must be strictly adhered to, also the number and sizes of rooms needed.

The Committee prefers appropriate proportions and solidity of construction in lieu of extreme and superfluous ornamentation.

The following rules are to be observed by architects proposing to submit designs for competition.

- 1st All plans submitted to be made to a scale of 4 or 8 feet to one inch
- 2nd The drawings to consist of Floor Plans, Front & Side Elevation and Section
- 3rd Colors to be used only to designate the materials of the construction in the Floor Plans and Section

Besides the above, a block plan to a scale of 32 feet to an inch showing the location of the buildings on the site is required.

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Designs not in accordance with these rules will not be considered.

Drawings of the competitors must be deposited free of charge at the office of the Company, Room No. 8, Fletcher & Sharpes Block in the city of Indianapolis on or before 4 o'clock P.M. July 21, 1884.

The Building Committee reserves the right to reject any and all designs submitted.

Schedule referred to in the foregoing instructions:

1st Entrance Gate built of stone and iron conveniently arranged for the purpose intended

2nd Residence for gatekeeper to consist of

	1 sitting room about 15' x 15'
	1 dining " " 12' x 15'
	1 kitchen " " 11' x 12'
	3 bedrooms each " 12' x 12'
	1 tool " " 10' x 24'
3rd	1 general waiting room about 22' x 36'
	1 ladies " " " 16' x 24'
	1 " " " 16' x 24'
	1 office " " 18' x 20'
	1 " " " 12' x 12'
	1 bell tower
	1 fire-proof vault about 8 x 10 ft.
	Lavatories and closets conveniently arranged to the waiting rooms. (Secretary's Record, pp. 398-400)

July 21, 1884. Hodgson, Wallingford & Stem presented one plan. Adolf Scherrer presented two plans, with drawings and specifications for each. "... a committee was appointed to examine the plans and employ a competent architect and builder to make a careful estimate of the cost, Strength of Materials, etc....and report...." (Secretary's Record, p. 400.)

September 2, 1884. The committee reported. William H. Brown, Architect, was employed to make the estimates, which were as follows:

Scherrer's plan #1:	\$57,561.40
Scherrer's plan #2:	\$55, 561.40
Hodgson, Wallingford & Stem:	\$58,846.72

The Committee decided unanimously in favor of the three-opening gateway of Scherrer's first plan and the gatekeeper's residence and office building of his second plan. Scherrer was instructed to furnish detailed estimates, drawings and specifications of the plans adopted "modified as to limit the cost to about Forty Thousand Dollars." Following the committee's report, the Board moved to set the cost at \$45,000 or less. No reason for reducing the original \$50,000 cost limit is given (Secretary's Record, pp. 401, 402.)

November 18, 1884. The building Committee accepted Scherrer's plans for "A Stone Gateway." (Secretary's Record, p. 403).

December 5, 1884. The Building Committee accepted a proposal by E. F. Gabel to build the stone gateway for \$19,764.58 (Secretary's Record, p. 404.)

December 9, 1884. Adolf Scherrer agreed to furnish all architectural plans, drawings, and specifications and superintend construction of "the New Gateway and adjoining buildings" for 4% of the cost. Contracts with Scherrer and Gabel were recommended (Secretary's Record, p. 405).

May 17, 1885. "The Building Committee reported they had decided on plans for an office building in connection with the new gateway and had advertised for bids on the same to be receivedMay 25" 1885 (Secretary's Record, p. 406). (Evidence appears at this point that the building was to be an office building only, for as constructed it lacks the first five rooms listed in the "Notice to Architects" and had only one of the two ladies' waiting rooms listed therein. Probably this reducing of the size of the building and possibly the change of exterior wall material from limestone to brick with limestone and terra cotta trim, was in the Board's mind when the total cost of the project was reduced to \$45,000.00.)

May 25, 1885. The Building Committee had "contracted with H. Helm & Son for the excavation and foundation for the new office, which was approved by the Board." The committee had also advertised and received bids for building of the new office, exclusive of foundation. Shover and Christian were low bidders at \$16,820.00 (Secretary's Record, p. 407).

June 2, 1885. Annual Meeting of the Corporation. "The Board of Managers have contracted for and are now building the New Gateway and office on the East side of our grounds which are

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to be finished by the 15th of October at a cost of \$39,328" (Secretary's Record, p. 409).

July 14, 1885. Future telephone service was contracted for with Central Union Telephone Co. The Building Committee reported having entered into contracts with:

Shover and Christian	\$16,820.00
Henry Helm & Son	\$ 2,743.00
A. Bruner for sewer extension, per lined foot. Amount is not stated.	

The Building Committee was instructed "to decide on a suitable plan for a new fence to finish the circular space each side of the new gateway and to enter into a contract for constructing the same." "The superintendent was authorized to have a telephone placed in his residence so as to connect with the office." (Secretary's Record, p. 413).

November 1885. Nicholas mentions that completion of the gateway "was hastened at the last in order to admit the funeral procession of Vice-President Hendricks--the first to pass through the new gates" (Nicholas, p. 110, and Phillips, p. 25).

April 13, 1886. The water closets in the new office were to be changed and improved. A marble tablet was to be placed over the doorway of the new office, inscribed "denoting the organization of the cemetery, the erection of the buildings, officers names or other information of public interest" (Secretary's Record, pp. 417, 418). (There is no such plaque above this door and no evidence of one having been there. At the left side of this door, however, there are four holes that might have resulted from anchor bolts fastening a tablet to the wall.)

May 11, 1886. A committee was "to select and purchase suitable furniture for our new office and reception rooms" (Secretary's Record, p. 423).

Very little of the original structure has been changed, so that the description of the present structure describes the original building reasonably well. From the porch on the south side one enters the central rectangular room which probably corresponds to the "general waiting room, about 22' x 36" of the program of 1884. To the right as one enters are two rooms that appear to be the "office room, about 18' x 20'" and the "office room, about 12' x 12'" of the 1884 program. To the left is one large room which appears to be one

of the two "ladies" waiting rooms "about 16' x 24'" of the original program. There is only one of these rooms. There are also toilet rooms, a small fire-proof vault and a bell tower. The building has brick bearing walls. The exterior cellar walls are limestone rubble. The girders of the framing of the first floor are 12" x 12", solid, in excellent condition, with very few indications of checks. The girders and the floor joists show rotary saw marks. The floor of the south porch is of encaustic tiles of complex patterns with the field of dark red.

The bell in the bell tower is approximately 44" across and 40" high. The following lettering appears on the north side of the bell: "Buckeye Bell Foundry 1885;" and on the south side, "Vanduzen & Tift, Cincinnati."

6. Alterations and additions: The original center entrance door was modified. On July 5, 1892, the Board of Managers authorized the making of "two windows....one in each side of the south front door of the main office, provided with plate glass and made in good style to correspond with the main building." Three hundred dollars was authorized for this work (Secretary's Record, p. 487).

In July 1912, the Board discussed construction of a "brick garage or stable in the rear of the office building," but no action on it was taken (Record...No. 2, p. 300). The present wood-frame two-car garage can be no older.

In 1929, a large vault was added at the north side of the central reception room (that is, at the rear of the building) in order to provide for the proper care of cemetery records (Indianapolis Star).

The position of anchor bolt holes and "shadows" on the south wall of the building at the center entrance door and on the encaustic tiles of the porch floor indicate that an entrance vestibule stood in this location. It projected about 8 feet, was 10 feet wide and was just higher than the door. The vestibule does not appear on a photograph dated around 1917 nor is it in place now.

From September 1970 to February 1971 the building was repaired and restored for use by the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana as an office building. The architect for the remodeling was H. Roll McLaughlin, FAIA. The following work was installed: central air conditioning with a unit air conditioner

in the larger former vault; new lighting fixtures, including several which were gas fixtures now wired for electricity; a low-voltage relay system for turning lights on and off; a complete security system including electrical burglar detection, intercom box at main entrance door, and electrical control of door latch; remodeling of original vault into a small office; remodeling of second vault into a workroom-kitchenette; refrigerated drinking water fountain in general reception room by main entrance door; telephone and intercom system; reconditioning and reroping of bell in the bell tower; complete interior redecoration, including wall-to-wall carpeting (Conversation with Robert Braun).

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Board of Managers on June 10, 1884 elected the following officers:

President, S. A. Fletcher
Treasurer, John C. New
Secretary, George P. Henderson
Superintendent, F. W. Chislett

The following members were selected as the Building Committee:

F. A. Morris, N. McCarty, Theo. P. Haughey, and F. W. Chislett, ex-officio (Secretary's Record, p. 397)

From the time of its dedication in 1864 the Crown Hill Cemetery was considered to be the most fashionable burial ground in Indianapolis. The graves of most of the prominent people of the city are to be found here. The Crown Hill Cemetery Gateway "was hastened at the last in order to admit the funeral procession of Vice-President Hendricks--the first to pass through the new gates." (Nicholas, p. 110, and Phillips, p. 25) Hendricks had served both the State of Indiana and the nation as senator, governor, and finally as President Grover Cleveland's Vice-President (also see Thomas A. Hendricks House, IND-64).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Photographs in Crown Hill Cemetery (Indianapolis, 1896):
 - (1) Gateway from east side with Office Building, ivy covered
 - (2) Office Building, ivy at side bays
 - (3) Gateway (labeled "Main Entrance"), west side. Shows a sentry-box-sized structure just inside of the southernmost pier of the gateway.

Photograph in Indianapolis Illustrated: Photograph of the Gateway and Office Building from the east. No ivy on Office Building. Sentry box barely shows at left. Probably the earliest photograph.

2. Primary and unpublished sources:

Conversation with Robert Braun, Executive Director of the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, June 29, 1971.

"Property Map, Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis, Indiana," 1"=200', February 1938. P. E. Middleton Co., Engineers. An inked drawing on linen tracing cloth; in owner's possession at 700 West 38th Street, Indianapolis. The office building and nearby structures are not shown on this map.

Record Crown Hill No. 2 (on spine), 700 West 38th St., Indianapolis, at the present Crown Hill Cemetery Office.

Secretary's Record, 1863-1894 (on spine), 700 West 38th St., Indianapolis, at the present Crown Hill Cemetery Office.

3. Secondary and published sources:

Burns, Lee. Early Architects and Builders of Indiana, Indianapolis, 1935.

Crown Hill Cemetery. Indianapolis, 1896. A list of lot Owners. A copy is at the Smith Historical Library in the State Library Building, Indianapolis.

"Crown Hill Cemetery, Founded in 1863, Now One of Four Largest In Country," Indianapolis Star, October 25, 1931, Part 1, p. 4.

Indianapolis Illustrated. H. R. Page & Co., 1889. Part 9.

Nicholas, Anna. The Story of Crown Hill. Privately printed by Crown Hill Association, Indianapolis, 1928.

Phillips, Clifton J. Indiana in Transition. Indianapolis, 1968.

- D. Likely sources not yet investigated: Successor architectural firm, if any, of Adolf Scherrer for working drawings and specifications. Firm not known at this time.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Gatehouse Office Building at Crown Hill Cemetery is an excellent example of the High Victorian Gothic style of architecture. The building is well scaled and finely detailed.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 76'-0" x 52'-6"; five bays; one story with a basement; irregular shape.
2. Foundations: Beveled stone base about 1 foot high defines the first floor. The stone is smooth faced and laid in an ashlar pattern.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The walls are red pressed brick and laid in a common bond, no header courses; joints are flush. Windows and gable are defined by limestone. Other decorative details including columns, medallions, finials, and buttress caps are also limestone.
4. Structural system, framing: Wall bearing.
5. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads: The front porch at the center of the south elevation is recessed between the west and east pavilions. The porch is about 12'-2 1/4" deep and 36'-3" across (west to east). The facade of the porch is composed of three bays. The two freestanding round limestone columns on square bases with foliate caps are similar to the engaged columns at the flanking walls. Gothic drop brick arches spring from the column caps and the arches are accented by brick gables with a limestone raking cornice. The porch floor is a mosaic tile arranged into three large diamonds. The wooden ceiling is subdivided into a series of recessed panels.
6. Chimneys: Four chimneys - two inside brick chimneys with terra cotta caps. There are two additional chimneys, both of brick. One brick chimney is a central unit at the east wing and the other is an inside unit at the west wing. The two remaining serve the central rectangular space.
7. Openings:

Doorways and doors: Simple main entrance wooden jambs and a

limestone lintel with egg and dart moulding. The transom also has a limestone lintel. The wooden door has a large glass light and two panels in a single tier below. Two secondary doors opening onto the porch from the east and west are similar.

Windows and shutters: Wooden double-hung sash set into a frame of stone heads and sills. These are generally grouped together in paired or triple windows. On the front (south) facade there are two 6'-9" double hung sash windows, one on either side of the main door. There is a lancet window on the square bell tower.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Three gabled elements. The ridge over the large main space is parallel to the facade and is slate. The end gables are at right angles to the facade, are lower, and are slate except for the west slope of the east gable which has asbestos shingles. The pent or shed roof over the porch is tile.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Corbeled red brick cornice with limestone raking cornices at gable ends.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Square bell tower at north-east corner of building is of brick construction. The steeple is roofed with slate.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Central rectangular space with mechanical equipment. One smaller space at west and two small rectangular spaces to the east.
- b. First floor: Central rectangular space with high ceiling is entered from the porch on the south elevation. An embalming room or vault is located behind, north of major central space. The central space acts as a distributor to a room at the west wing and two rooms at the east wing of the structure. Toilets were added at the rear (north) of the west wing. The ladies' room is entered from the west wing and the mens' room is accessible from the central space through a hallway.
- c. Second floor: A small room is located at the northeast corner of the building in the tower.

2. Stairways: Basement to first floor is an enclosed single-run wooden stairway with fourteen risers. It is located in the west wing and opens in the mens' room at the first floor. First floor: Stairway to second floor, located in the northeast section of the building is also an enclosed wooden structure. The stairway to the apex of the tower is an open unit with open risers which rises from the second floor northeast corner room.
3. Flooring: Basement: Brick floor, herringbone pattern in central space; concrete floor in west and east wings. First floor: Asphalt tile laid in a diagonal pattern, black and white in color with a black border. Embalming room or vault has white ceramic tile. Toilets have matte finish tile floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Basement: Exterior walls are smooth faced stone laid in ashlar pattern. Interior bearing walls are of brick laid in a common bond. Ceiling in central spaces is transite and appears to have been added after the original construction. Wooden joists are exposed at west and east wings. First floor: Hardwood paneled wainscot about 7'-6" high in the main or central space with plaster walls above painted an off-white. Similar wooden wainscot in east and west wings but about 3'-6" high, plaster walls above and they, too, are painted an off-white. The ceilings in all of the above mentioned spaces have wooden detailing and are finished. The vault has walls and ceilings of white ceramic tile. The toilet rooms have ceramic tile wainscot about 3'-0", tan in color with plaster walls and ceilings which are painted tan.
5. Doorways and doors: Basement: Openings in brick walls have segmental arches. First floor: Hardwood frames with chamfered edges at jambs, decorative hardwood transom bars. Doors are three-tiered paneled wood leaves.
6. Special decorative features, trim and cabinet work: Door frames and wooden wainscoting and paneled ceiling plus finely carved medallions and abstract geometric floral patterns at door jambs, overmantels and ceiling give an impression of a medieval hall.
7. Mechanical equipment: Heating: Hot water heating, coal fired, stoker fed boiler in questionable condition.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The gateway stands at the easternmost boundary of the cemetery. The cemetery is composed of approximately 37¹/₄ acres and is located about 3 miles north of the city center within the present city limits. Winding roads traverse the cemetery grounds and lead through a natural and informal pattern of grassy meadows and clumps of trees and shrubbery of a wide variety of species. This landscaping is a significant example of Romantic landscape design in the Olmstead tradition. Near the center of the west boundary is a low hill of a hundred feet or more, known as Crown Hill, from which the cemetery takes its name. The remainder of the cemetery's terrain is generally level ground.
2. Outbuildings: In addition to the Gatehouse, Crown Hill Cemetery is well-known for its Gateway (IND-57) and Chapel (IND-58). The grave site of President Harrison and the monument of poet James Whitcomb Riley are also notable.

Prepared by Wesley I. Shank
Architectural Historian
National Park Service
June 1971

PART III PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a cooperatively financed project in 1970 between the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and the Historic American Buildings Survey.

The project was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Measured drawings were prepared by student architects under the direction of Professor David R. Hermansen of Ball State University, Muncie Indiana. Professor Wesley I. Shank of Iowa State University prepared the historical data, and Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, provided the photographic record. H. Roll McLaughlin, FAIA, State Preservation Coordinator, President of the Historic Landmarks Foundation, and member of the HABS Advisory Board, served as consultant throughout the project. This report was edited for HABS in 1976 by Candace Reed.